

Jesse-Hosmer Building
Lawyers' Row Block
1419 N. Court House Road
Arlington
Arlington County
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1276

HABS
VA,
7-ARL,
5-

PHOTOGRAPHS AND
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JESSE-HOSMER BUILDING

HABS No. VA-1276

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Location: 1419 N. Court House Road, Arlington County, Virginia

Present Owner: Arlington County, Virginia

Present Use: Demolished in June 1990

Significance: The Jesse-Hosmer Building was part of the Lawyers' Row complex located on the east side of N. Court House Road opposite the 1960 Arlington County Court House. The lawyers' (or courthouse) row represents a cultural and architectural heritage that is unique to Virginia. Beginning in the eighteenth century, small service buildings such as these, subservient to the larger courthouse, were erected to accommodate lawyers and clerks. (See Lawyers' Row Block, HABS No. VA-1277)

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1940, according to county real estate assessment records; the original building permit issued to Charles Jesse is dated 3 July 1935.
2. Original and subsequent owners: The building occupies part of lot 12, block 9, Fort Myer Heights subdivision, as plotted in Deed Book N4, page 50. Records are located in the Virginia Land Records Office. The following is an incomplete chain of title.

Deed dated 24 July 1900: Fort Myer Heights Land Co. to Franz Joseph Hugli. Deed book 102, page 397.

Deed dated 8 December 1972: Herbert N. and Joyce W. Morgan, one-third interest conveyed to Mark Morgan. Deed book 2006, page 547.

Deed of trust dated 29 September 1972: Herbert and Joyce Morgan to Walter H. Lockowandt and John H. Aylor, trustees. Deed book 1797, page 525.

Deed of confirmation dated 29 September 1972: Real Title Corp. to Herbert N. Morgan. Deed book 1797, page 521.

Deed dated 17 June 1982: Herbert N., Joyce W., and Mark W. Morgan to Troy Street Associates. Deed book 2065, page 296.

Deed dated 18 June 1982: Troy Street Associates to Arlington County. Deed book 2065, page 298; Arlington County, Virginia Land Records.

3. Alterations and Additions: The following was obtained from the building-permit files:

9 April 1952: permit #8361 to install gable roof, new windows in front wall.

27 July 1967: permit #7955 to remove old roof, furnish and install asphalt roofing shingles.

B. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The least significant of the Lawyers' Row structures at the time of demolition was the Jesse-Hosmer Building, built and owned by Charles T. Jesse, probably ca. 1934-40. (See also the Jesse Building, HABS No. VA-1273)

Attorney and Circuit Court Judge Emory Hosmer, the occupant for many years, began practicing law in Arlington in 1923. The 1927-28 directory lists Hosmer as living at 108 Sherman Avenue, which would have been the renumbered offices at Nos. 1415 or 1419, or the dwelling at 1415-1/2.¹ Hosmer's career included posts as Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney, Commissioner in Chancery, and Circuit Court judge.² Lawyer M. Patton Echols also occupied the building at one time; his son (1925-64+) was also an attorney and engineer who practiced law here from 1958.³

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The concrete-block, one-story office had a two-room addition on the rear. Lacking any architectural styling, the structure might exemplify the quality of the first generation of structures to line this block; only in alignment and scale does it fit in with its neighbors.
2. Condition of the fabric: Fair until demolition in 1990.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 828 square feet.

¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, 1936, 1954-60.

² Cited in Carol E. Hooper, "The Nature of Things: The Courthouse Row Buildings of Arlington County, Virginia." Typed manuscript, n.d.; Polk's Washington Suburban Directory of Maryland and Virginia Towns Adjacent to the District of Columbia, 1927-28 (R.L. Polk & Co., Publishers, 1927), 633; Richard Lee Morton, Virginia Lives: The Old Dominion Who's Who (Hopkinsville, KY: Historical Record Association, 1964), 293. Some confusion arises because a 1927-28 directory lists his residence at 108 Sherman Avenue; this may have been the original structure on the site. Echols Jr. (1925-64+), was an attorney and engineer who practiced law starting in 1958, and he lived at 1815 N. 14th Street.

³ Morton, 293.

2. Foundation: Concrete-block.
3. Wall construction: The walls are concrete-block; the east facade was stuccoed. The entire structure is painted white.
4. Structural system, framing: Load-bearing concrete-block.
5. Porches: A concrete stoop with three steps is in front of the entrance on the east facade.
6. Chimneys: One interior brick chimney is near the center of the south exterior wall of the addition.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entry is on the west facade. The wood door has four vertical wood panels with four small lights above the transom. The front-door architrave features two wood pilasters with a simple entablature. All trim is painted white. A rear entrance is located in the east facade; it has a six-panel wood door set in a concrete-block frame.
 - b. Windows: North of the front door is a casement window attached to a picture window. A plain plank running above this window once had a sign anchored to it. All other windows are one-over-one-light double-hung sash set in wood frames. The window frames and trim are painted white.
8. Roof shape, covering: The original block has an end-gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. The addition has a flat roof.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
 - a. First floor: The front door opens into a room that spans the width of the building. The north wall features built-in cabinets with shelves above. Another built-in shelf unit is in the southwest corner of the room. A short hall originating at the west wall of the main room leads to a small bathroom on the right/north, and a small office and furnace room on the left/south. The hall terminates in a long, narrow room with built-in shelving on all but the west wall. A walk-in closet with built-in shelves is entered from this room. The parking lot to the rear of the building is accessed through the exterior door in this room.
2. Flooring: The floors are asphalt tile over concrete. With the exception of the bathroom, furnace room, and walk-in closet they are covered with green,

wall-to-wall carpeting held down by quarter-round molding.

3. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are plastered and painted. The main room, hall, and walk-in closet are a light-green color. The rest of the rooms are painted white. Paint and plaster are failing throughout. All ceilings are covered with acoustical tile.
4. Doorways and doors: Doorways throughout the structure are 3' x 7'-10-1/2". All interior doors are paneled wood.
5. Light fixtures: The bathroom, furnace room, walk-in closet, and hall have fixtures for incandescent lights. The incandescent fixtures have screw-in round glass diffusers and each accept two bulbs. All other rooms are equipped with fluorescent light fixtures. A brass-finish hanging lamp hangs from a ceiling rosette in the hall.
6. Heating: Oil-burning furnace; iron radiators are in all rooms except the hall and closet.

D. Site:

1. General setting: The building was located across from the 1960 Arlington County Court House, between the Jesse Building (north) and the Rucker Building (south), on a deep and narrow lot.
2. Landscaping, enclosures: There were evergreen shrubs in front of the building, but these were removed in anticipation of demolition. The front yard had a small lawn; an asphalt parking area was in the rear.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

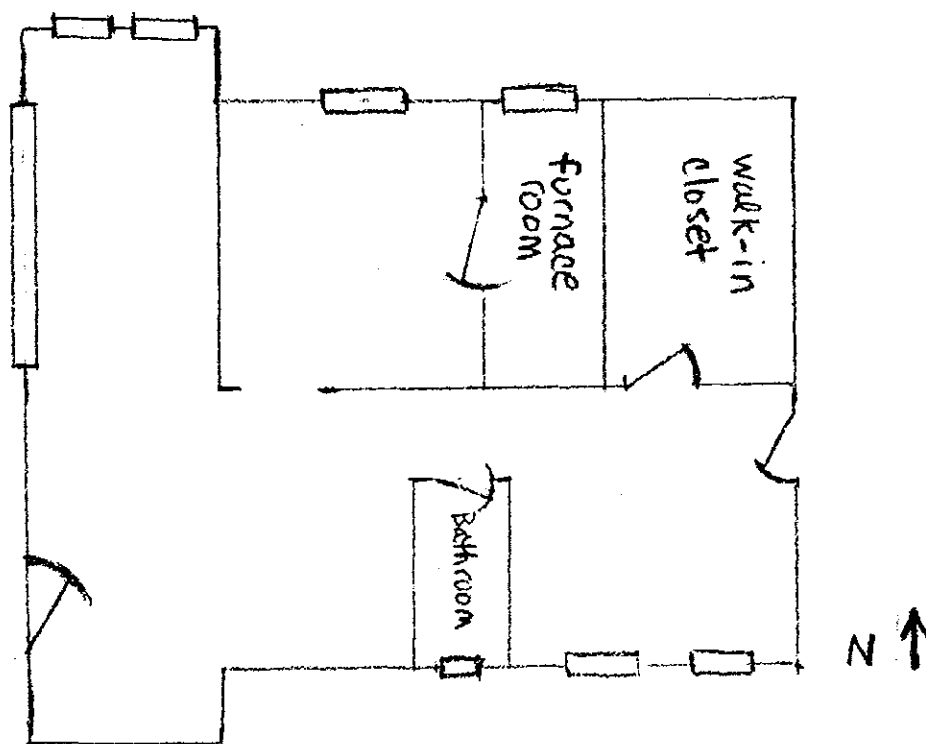
- A. Primary and unpublished sources: For complete a bibliography, see this section of Lawyers' Row Block, HABS VA-1277.
- B. Likely Sources Not Yet Consulted: The photographic archives of the Arlington Historical Society may contain old views.

Prepared by:
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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation project was coordinated by Sara Amy Leach for the Arlington Heritage Alliance Inc. with the sponsorship of the Bell Atlantic Charitable Foundation, to mitigate the impending loss of these historic Arlington County buildings. Estella Bryans-Munson served as project historian, and John Schwartz was

the large-format photographer. All documentation is available from the HABS Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, at the Library of Congress, and the Virginia Room, Arlington County Library.



Sketch plan of Jesse-Hosmer Building. Not to scale. By Bryans-Munson.